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Annual Reports

of

Medical Officer of Health

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for

1956

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BEWDLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL.

YEAR 1956

Mayor

Councillor R. FELLOWS, J.P.

Chairman of Water and Health Committee:

Councillor A. J. HOWELL

Vice-Chairman of Water and Health Committee:

Councillor R. FELLOWS

Water and Health Committee:

Alderman H. N. FROST, J.P., C.A.
Alderman P. W. PALMER
Alderman W. E. JAMES (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor Mrs. D. L. LAWRENCE, C.C.
Councillor E. J. FINCH
Councillor Mrs. F. S. PRITCHARD
Councillor B. INCE
Councillor R. W. COLES
Councillor J. HINTON
Councillor G. H. DALLEY

Medical Officer of Health:

Dr. R. W. MARKHAM, B.A., M.B., B.Ch., D.P H.

Public Health Inspector:

Mr. J. E. SHEEN, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.,
Cert.R.S.I. Meat & Other Foods.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS

OF THE

WATER AND HEALTH COMMITTEE

BEWDLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report on the Health of the Borough for the year 1956.

In accordance with instructions from the Ministry of Health, the report is divided into the following sections :—

"A" Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

"B" General Provision of Health Services for the Area.

"C" Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

"D" Housing.

"E" Inspection and Supervision of Food.

"F" Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Diseases.

SECTION "A"

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area

Area (in acres)	3,681
Registrar General's estimate of resident population (mid 1956)	4,880
Population (Census 1951)	4,756
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1956) according to Rate Books	1,635
Rateable Value	£35,640
Sum represented by One Penny Rate	£165

Industry within the Borough of Bewdley is on a small scale, the principal source of local employment being a factory processing Animal Feeding Stuffs, Seeds, Fertilisers, etc., where 75 persons were employed during 1956.

Other sources of employment, besides Agricultural, include a Saw Mill, and, remaining from the traditional Bewdley industries, a Brass Foundry, Rope Works, and Leather Works.

VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE AREA

Live Births

	1956			*1955*		
	Total	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*
Legitimate ...	75	39	36	67	36	31
Illegitimate ...	8	4	4	3	3	—
	83	43	40	70	39	31

The Live Birth rate per 1,000 estimated population of the Borough was: 1956, 17.0 (1955, 14.5).

The Live Birth rate for England and Wales was: 1956, 15.7 (1955, 15.0).

Still Births

	1956			*1955*		
	Total	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*
Legitimate ...	—	—	—	2	1	1
Illegitimate ...	—	—	—	—	—	—
	—	—	—	2	1	1

The Still Birth rate per 1,000 births (Live and Still) was: 1956, Nil (1955, 27.7).

The Still Birth rate per 1,000 births for England and Wales was: 1956, 23.0.

The Still Birth rate per 1,000 estimated population in the Borough was: 1956, Nil (1955, 0.41).

The Still Birth rate per 1,000 estimated population for England and Wales was: 1956, 0.36 (1955, 0.35).

Deaths

1956			1955		
Total	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*
62	31	31	54	27	27

The Death rate per 1,000 of the estimated population was: 1956, 12.7 (1955, 11.20).

The Death rate for the whole of England and Wales was: 1956, 11.7 (1955, 11.7).

Maternal Mortality

There were no deaths of mothers associated with childbirth during the year.

Deaths of Infants under 1 year

	1956			1955		
	Total	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*
Legitimate ...	2	1	1	2	1	1
Illegitimate ...	2	1	1	—	—	—
	4	2	2	2	1	1

Three of these infants were under 4 weeks' old.

The Infant Mortality rate was: 1956, 36.13 (1955, 28.5).

The Infant Mortality rate for England and Wales was: 1956, 23.8 (1955, 24.9).

Zymotic Deaths

During the year there were no deaths from Diphtheria, Scarlet Fever, Measles or Whooping Cough.

Causes of Death

Ref No.		*Male*	*Female*
10, 11, 14.	Cancer	6	5
17.	Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	1	5
18, 19, 20.	Heart Disease	11	10
21.	Other Circulatory Disease ...	1	3
24.	Bronchitis	2	3
26.	Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum	1	—
27.	Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea ...	2	—
31.	Congenital Malformations ...	1	1
32.	Other defined and ill-defined Diseases	4	3
34.	All other accidents	1	—
35.	Suicide	1	1
	Total	31	31

SECTION "B"

General Provision of Health Services for the Area

Bacteriological examinations of samples taken from producers and manufacturers, and all chemical examinations of food, milk and water are carried out by the Worcestershire County Council Laboratory. Bacteriological examinations of consumer samples of milk, water and ice-cream are undertaken by the Public Health Laboratory of the Worcester Royal Infirmary, in addition to the routine clinical pathology.

Ambulance Service

This is provided by the Worcestershire County Council as Local Health Authority, and is based on Kidderminster.

Home Nursing and Health Visiting

There are two District Nurses available in the Borough, one each for Bewdley and Wribbenhall. There is also one whole-time Health Visitor.

Clinics

An Infant Welfare Clinic is also held fortnightly, with a doctor in attendance monthly, when Diphtheria immunisation and vaccination are carried out.

Hospitals

The following hospitals administered by the Midland Regional Hospital Board are available:

1. The Kidderminster General Hospital for general medical and surgical cases.
2. The Blakebrook Hospital.
3. The Hayley Green Isolation Hospital for Infectious Diseases.
4. The Lucy Baldwin Maternity Hospital at Stourport.
5. The Croft Maternity Home.

Tuberculosis

(1) Treatment.—A dispensary is held twice weekly at the Kidderminster General Hospital, and there are Sanatoria at Knightwick and St. Wulstans, Malvern.

(2) Prevention and After-Care.—Preventive measures of this disease are the responsibility of the County Council and are carried out under the direction of the County Medical Officer.

An After-care Sub-Committee administers the service in this district in conjunction with the other districts in the Kidderminster Divisional Area.

Venereal Disease

A treatment centre is operated at the Kidderminster General Hospital by the Regional Hospital Board.

Domestic Help Service

Under arrangements made by the Local Health Authority, Home Help Service has been established in the district and is administered locally by the Women's Voluntary Service. At the

end of the year, 3 full-time, 19 part-time and 6 occasional home helps were employed, and 65 Chronic, 8 General, 2 Maternity and 1 T.B. case received attention.

This has proved a most valuable service to the community in cases of need in the various types of domestic emergency.

Section 47, National Assistance Act, 1948

No action has been taken by the Council under this section during the year.

SECTION "C"

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area

Water Supply

1. The water supply has been satisfactory both in quality and quantity.
2. Samples of water for bacteriological analysis are taken monthly and for complete chemical analysis twice yearly.
3. The water is not plumbo-solvent.
4. No action was necessary for any form of contamination of the piped water supply.
5. The number of houses supplied from the public water mains direct to houses is 1,575. Population served approximately 5,100.

5a. 40 houses are supplied from standpipes; population served approximately 130. 15 houses obtain water from private supplies: population served approximately 50.

Extension of Supply

A new 20″ x 361′ borehole, delivering 60,000 gallons per hour, came into operation in October, 1955. This additional source adds to the security of the Undertaking by ensuring an adequate supply, in case of a breakdown of either pump, to meet the needs of the Borough and Stourport U.D.C. Increasing supplies are being provided to parts of Droitwich R.D.C., and the Council is capable of supplying other areas if desired.

Further samples taken from shallow wells have again proved unfit for drinking. As a result of this and requests by the residents of this area, the Council are considering the provision of a new main to supply St. Johns Lane.

Drainage and Sewerage

The greater part of the district has a sewer available. Sewage flows partly by gravitation and partly by pumping from three compressed air ejectors to the Sewage Pumping Station, where, after screening, it is pumped to the Kidderminster Joint Outfall Works for treatment. No serious nuisance has occurred during the year concerning the drainage system in general.

Negotiations are in progress concerning mains sewerage facilities for several properties in Spencer Avenue, Wribbenhall. It is hoped that during the coming year the use of four pail closets and two cesspools will be discontinued.

There was a recurrence of a sewage overflow from the drains in the cellar of one property at Beales Corner, Wribbenhall. Following a meeting with the Borough Surveyor and the owner/occupier to ascertain the cause, certain remedial measures were undertaken which it is hoped will prove successful.

SECTION "D"

Housing

Forty new houses were completed by the Corporation during the year and six new houses were completed by private enterprise.

The difficulty in financing the building of suitable type dwellings for persons displaced by the Slum Clearance Programme appears to be increasing. The rising cost of loans seem to make impossible the provision of "suitable alternative accommodation," bearing in mind the Housing Act definition that such accommodation shall, amongst other things, " . . . be suitable to his means." Further action by the Health Department in relation to the Slum Clearance programme must still await resolution of this problem.

Caravan Sites

There are now four sites authorised under The Town & Country Planning Act, 1947. These are at:—

(1) The Brant Farm, Upper Blackstone;
(2) Hursts Meadow, Northwood Lane;
(3) Council Hill Camp, Cleobury Road;
(4) Riverside Caravan Park, Dowles Road;

and allow a combined total of 400 Caravans.

Further extensions and improvements have been carried out at the Riverside Caravan Park.

It is considered desirable that all sites should operate under Public Health Act licences, in addition to any planning permission that may obtain.

County Council action has continued, whenever possible, to secure the removal of unsuitable structures, and it can be assumed that the coming year will mark the final clearance of this type of accommodation.

SECTION "E"

Inspection and Supervision of Food

Food Hygiene Regulations, 1955

Copies of the Central Council for Health Education leaflet, "Your Guide to the Food Hygiene Regulations, 1955," were distributed during the early part of the year to all food shopkeepers within the district. This has proved a very useful publication and has done much to assist in publicising the regulations.

Meat Inspection

Meat Inspection Services and general supervision of Food Premises were carried out by the Public Health Inspector during the year. See Public Health Inspector's Report.

SECTION "F"

Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Diseases

Diphtheria Immunisation

The number of children immunised during the year at either Clinics, Schools or by General Practitioners, was as follows:

	Under 1	*1-4*	*5-15*	*Over 15*
Immunisation ...	22	9	16	0
Reinforcing doses ...	0	0	62	0

No cases of diphtheria were notified during the year.

Smallpox Vaccination

The number of children vaccinated during the year at either Clinics or by General Practitioners was as follows:

	Under 1	*1-4*	*5-15*	*Over 15*
Vaccinations ...	34	2	0	1
Re-vaccinations ...	0	0	3	7

Poliomyeltis

No cases of Poliomyelitis were notified during the year.

The new vaccine for immunisation against Poliomyelitis became available in small quantities during the early part of the year.

It is hoped that the Ministry of Health will issue information to Medical Officers undertaking this scheme in advance of the Press and Radio, in order that parents may be suitably advised.

Notifications

Cases of Infectious Diseases notified during the year are shewn in the following table:—

Disease	*Total Cases Notified*	*Cases admitted to Hospital*	*Deaths Total*
Scarlet Fever	8	—	—
Measles	Nil	—	—
Whooping Cough ...	18	—	—
Acute Pneumonia ...	7	—	—

There were no cases of Food Poisoning or Suspected Food Poisoning notified during the year.

Tuberculosis

The following table gives particulars of new cases of Tuberculosis and deaths from the disease in the area during the year.

Age Periods	NEW CASES Pulmonary M.	NEW CASES Pulmonary F.	NEW CASES Non-Pulmonary M.	NEW CASES Non-Pulmonary F.	DEATHS Pulmonary M.	DEATHS Pulmonary F.	DEATHS Non-Pulmonary M.	DEATHS Non-Pulmonary F.
0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
20	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
35	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
45	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 & over	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
	2		—		—		—	

A total number of 33 T.B. cases on the Borough Register at Dec. 31st. 1956 were as follows:

Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
M	F	M	F
15	13	2	3

Mass Radiography Service

A three-day visit was made to the town in September by the Mobile Radiography Unit of the Birmingham Regional Hospital Board. There was a good response by the public of Bewdley and surrounding areas, a total number of 600 persons being X-Rayed during the period.

CONCLUSION

The public health services provided within the Borough are generally satisfactory; and I am pleased to record that the Council have now agreed to purchase a modern type Refuse Vehicle. The combined use of this vehicle for refuse and night-soil removal should ultimately result in much improved services, with a possible reduction in costs.

I should like to thank the Mayor, Members of the Council, and the Council's Staff, for their help and co-operation during the year.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

R. W. MARKHAM,

Medical Officer of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR'S REPORT

For the year ending 31st December, 1956

HOUSING

Increasing use is being made of Improvement Grants, and every opportunity taken to require the carrying out of urgent repairs. In all cases to date, the owners have readily agreed to carry out these repairs (at their expense) should a grant be made available for the improvement works submitted. In some cases the provision of mains sewerage facilities have been made possible solely by means of improvement grants. Regular inspections are carried out whilst repair and improvement works are in progress, and particular attention paid to repair works.

Further details of housing inspections are contained in the Summary of Work of the department.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Regular inspection of all food premises within the Borough continues. Many improvements have been carried out in conjunction with the Food Hygiene Regulations, 1955. The provision of suitable hand washing facilities has been carried out in all but the smallest shops, and this matter is receiving continuous attention. Lack of space in the small general stores is invariably the root of the trouble.

Several shopkeepers were warned against the practice of displaying food outside shops in such positions that were "liable to contamination." The full co-operation of the shopkeepers was obtained in all cases, and the practice has now ceased.

Meat Inspection

Three slaughterhouses were re-licenced in July, though only two remain in regular use.

A total number of 294 visits made to food premises during the year included 176 visits made to slaughterhouses for meat inspection purposes. These inspections are carried out at the time of slaughtering whenever possible or as soon practicable afterwards. A detailed register is kept of all animals slaughtered and inspected within the Borough, together with details of meat condemned and the reasons therefor.

The table set out below indicates the number of carcases inspected as against the number slaughtered.

Carcases Inspected and Condemned

	Cattle (excluding cows)	*Cows*	*Calves*	*Sheep and Lambs*	*Pigs*
Number killed	160	Nil	63	1,297	312
Number inspected	152	Nil	49	1,034	254
All diseases except Tuberculosis:					
Whole carcases condemned	Nil	—	1	1	Nil
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	55	—	—	19	10
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis ...	36	—	2.1	1.9	3.9
Tuberculosis only:					
Whole carcases condemned	Nil	—	Nil	Nil	Nil
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	3	—	Nil	Nil	2
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	2.9	—	Nil	Nil	0.78

The high incidence of distomatosis in cattle continues.

Condemned Food

The total quantity of meat and offal condemned at slaughterhouses during the year amounted to 11cwt. 27½lbs. Other miscellaneous foods (mainly canned goods) condemned and surrendered as unfit for food amounted to 73lbs. 15ozs.

Method of disposal of condemned food is by incineration, except in the case of meat and offal at slaughterhouses. This is stained green, as recommended, and collection made by authorised dealers.

During an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in Worcestershire, Bewdley was included in the Infected Area. Suitable precautions were taken against the disposal of condemned meat and slaughterhouse waste, and approved type disinfectant was issued for slaughterhouse cleansing, and used also on all vehicles connected therewith.

Milk Distribution

Dealers (principal) licences, in connection with the distribution of milk, were issued as follows :—

Tuberculin Tested Milk	2
Tuberculin Tested Milk (Pasteurised) ...	1
Sterilised Milk	2
Pasteurised Milk	1

Dealers (supplementary) licences issued were:—

Tuberculin Tested Milk (Pasteurised) ...	2
Pasteurised Milk	3
Sterilised Milk	2

Milk (Special Designation) (Pasteurised and Sterilised Milk) Regulations, 1949

36 samples of milk, heat treated within the Borough, were taken by the Food and Drugs Authority (Worcestershire County Council) during the year. Analysis results were as follows:—

Phosphatase Test			*Methylene Blue Test*		
Pass	*Fail*	*Void*	*Pass*	*Fail*	*Void*
36	—	—	36	—	—

Ice-Cream

No applications have been received during the year for registration of premises for the manufacture of Ice-cream, and only one dealer remains on the register as such. Twenty-four retailers are registered for the sale of Ice-cream, many of whom deal only in pre-packed products.

RODENT CONTROL

During the year the following infestations have been dealt with in accordance with the recommendations of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries:

Corporation Property (excluding dwelling houses)	8
Private dwellings	281
Business premises	12
Agricultural. etc.	3
Total	304

22 complaints received attention.

Sewers

Two sewer treatments were carried out during the year in compliance with Ministry requirements and this enabled the local authority to qualify for financial assistance with this service.

REFUSE COLLECTION AND SALVAGE

House refuse is collected weekly in the town and fortnightly in the more outlying areas. The present method of disposal is by controlled tipping, the site used being approximately 1¼ miles from the town centre.

In addition to house refuse, trade refuse is collected and disposed of, the average collection amounting to approximately 2 tons per week. A limited amount of trade refuse is retained for salvage (cartons, containers, etc.) and a total quantity of 12 tons 17 cwt. was collected and sold during the year. Approximately 5 tons of scrap metal, etc., was salvaged and disposed of.

Following representations from the Midland Area Joint Scrap Survey Committee, a trial period of recovery of tins and ferrous scrap from domestic refuse was commenced towards the end of the year. It is felt that the high cost of recovery will not warrant continuation of this service, in view of the low prices at present ruling. Availability of labour in this area also adds to the difficulty in recovering this material. Trial recoveries to date have shown that approximately one fifth of the time is required to level, unsorted, a load of refuse, against the time required to sort over, extract tins, etc., and level out.

SUMMARY OF WORK OF DEPARTMENT

A total number of 1,419 visits were distributed as follows :—

Housing defects, overcrowding, etc.	407
Houses let-in-lodgings	6
Verminous premises	5
Infectious disease	12
Factories (Part I only)	23
Food premises (including licensed premises)	118
Meat inspections	176
Water supply	11
Rodent and other Pest Control (excluding operators' visits)	22
Caravan sites	32
Drains and sanitary fittings (old property) ...	184
Drains and sanitary fittings (new property)	27
Refuse complaints, Corporation Tip, etc. ...	78
Miscellaneous	14
	1,115
Rodent treatments	304
Total	1,419

I am,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES E. SHEEN,

Public Health Inspector.

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